



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Teaching People Not Just to Fish, But to Build Businesses Too



Dylan Butler, USAID

As USAID's [annual letter](#) this year notes, in development it is no longer enough to teach a farmer to grow a new crop—or in this case, to fish. Our work isn't done until we help a farmer learn to run a successful business too. This is precisely what is happening in Bangladesh.

Consider Harun and Bina Majhy, who have co-managed a fishing business in rural Bangladesh for years. To take their small-scale operation to a commercial level, the couple needed training and equipment.

Enter USAID. In 2011, Bina received training from USAID's [Office of Food for Peace](#) on nursery management and fingerling (young fish) production. The next year, [Feed the Future](#) (led also by USAID) trained Harun on fish hatchery management so the Majhys could begin producing even higher quality fingerlings at a larger scale. Today, the Majhys are confident business leaders in their community – not only do they manage their own successful fish nursery and hatchery business, they also provide others with steady employment.

Bina and Harun's story is just one of many in Bangladesh of small-scale fish farmers who have taken their businesses to the next level through an innovative partnership that links Feed the Future's long-term food security programs with USAID's Office of Food for Peace to scale up aquaculture as a pathway to development.

Why aquaculture? In a country where nearly 40 percent of the population lives in poverty, small-scale fish farming enables Bangladeshi farmers, particularly women, to provide nutritious food for their families and is an entry point to the cash economy. And while there is significant demand for fish in Bangladesh, small-scale fish farmers often struggle to produce enough fish for local and district markets at competitive costs.

So, in 2010 USAID launched two programs in Bangladesh that continue to change lives today. The first, managed by Food for Peace, teaches techniques that poor smallholder fish farmers are using to increase their productivity and incomes. The other

is a multi-faceted Feed the Future aquaculture program aimed at increasing commercial fish and shrimp production in Bangladesh. Together with partners such as the World Fish Center, Save the Children, and ACDI/VOCA, these programs are building a comprehensive income-generation strategy to help poor households expand fish production in Bangladesh while increasing their profitability and market competitiveness.

Traditionally, Food for Peace works with poor and extremely poor households who are often landless and have limited access to the necessary technologies and techniques to start an aquaculture farm. Meanwhile, Feed the Future typically works with community champions in Bangladesh seeking to grow their established aquaculture enterprises into larger commercial operations. By bridging the gap between aquaculture start-ups and businesses looking—and ready—to scale, this collaboration is building long-lasting success in Bangladesh.

For the Majhys, the results have been promising. Before training from Food for Peace, Bina earned the equivalent of about \$90 every month. Using her newfound skills, she now brings in about \$129 per month through her family's business. Equally important, she plays a vital role as a service provider, acting as a local facilitator for other aspiring women aquaculture entrepreneurs and providing quality fingerlings to her community.

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"My income is increased by the Food for Peace project and my business has been expanded by Feed the Future," Bina says proudly.

Solutions to poverty and hunger are complex, which is why the U.S. Government addresses these challenges along the continuum from extreme poverty to commercial production. Collaborating across programs is one way to increase impact and support poor families, helping them not just survive but thrive over the long term.

In Bangladesh, this partnership is helping fish farmers mitigate the immediate threats of poverty while also linking them to higher-quality fish that can help them access commercial markets. It's a collaboration that has already benefited more than 34,000 households and 150 commercial fish farms – numbers that continue to [increase](#) every day.

Related Resources

- More results like these in Feed the Future's latest [progress report](#)
- Learn more about USAID's work in [food security](#) in Bangladesh
- Find more stories and resources on [scaling up](#) on the Agrilinks website